

Message Text

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JERUSALEM PLEASE PASS TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON

FOLLOWING REPEAT NEW DELHI 3323 ACTION SECSTATE INFO COLOMBO

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10 MAR

QUOTE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NEW DELHI 03323

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, IN, US, MASS

SUBJECT: FONMIN CHAVAN STATEMENT ON US ARMS POLICY IN

PARLIAMENT

SUMMARY: IN A MARCH 10 STATEMENT IN PARLIAMENT, FONMIN Y.B.

CHAVAN, CRITICIZED THE US FOR ITS DECISION TO LIFT THE ARMS

EMBARGO, WHILE NOTING THAT THE TIME-TESTED INDIAN POLICY OF

NON-ALIGNMENT, IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH THIRD-WORLD COUNTRIES,

AND PARTICULARLY OF STRENGTHENING INDIA'S RELATIONS WITH ITS

NEIGHBORS IN SOUTH ASIA WOULD CONTINUE. CHAVAN ALSO MENTIONED

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THAT THE SOVIET COLLECTIVE SECURITY CONCEPT HAD NOT YET

REACHED CONCRETE FORM; THAT INDIA WOULD SUPPORT IT IF THE CONCEPT WOULD IMPROVE PROSPECTS FOR ECONOMIC AND MILITARY SECURITY AMONG THE PARTICIPANTS; BUT THAT IT WOULD BE UNABLE TO COOPERATE IF THE CONCEPT APPEARED DIRECTED AGAINST ANY PARTICULAR COUNTRY. END SUMMARY.

1. ON MAR. 10, FONMIN Y.B. CHAVAN DELIVERED A HALF-HOUR LARGELY EXTEMPORANEOUS STATEMENT TO THE UPPER HOUSE (RAJYA SABHA) OF THE INDIAN PARLIAMENT ON THE RECENT US DECISION TO LIFT THE ARMS EMBARGO.

2. SPEAKING AT THE CONCLUSION OF A FIVE-HOUR DEBATE, CHAVAN BEGAN BY REVIEWING US MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO PAKISTAN AFTER 1965 AND UP TO THE 1971 INDO-PAKISTAN CONFLICT. HE THEN COMMENTED ON THE SEVERAL REASONS HE SAID HAD BEEN GIVEN BY THE US FOR LIFTING THE EMBARGO. FAR FROM CONTRIBUTING TO THE "NORMALIZATION" OF RELATIONS IN SOUTH ASIA, CHAVAN CHARGED, THE US WAS GIVING IMPETUS TO A CONTRARY PSYCHOLOGY WHICH HAD LED PRESIDENT BHUTTO TO TALK ONCE AGAIN ABOUT "WAR". CHAVAN COMPARED INDIA'S EXPENDITURES ON ARMS IN RELATION TO ITS GNP (3-4 PERCENT) AND NATIONAL BUDGET (20-22 PERCENT) WITH THOSE OF PAKISTAN (9 PERCENT AND 56 PERCENT RESPECTIVELY) IN DISCOUNTING THE ARGUMENT THAT INDIA WAS EXPENDING LARGE AMOUNTS ON ARMS. NOTING THE JUSTIFICATION THAT PAKISTAN WAS THE ONLY US ALLY NOT ABLE TO PURCHASE ARMS FROM THE US, HE ASKED RHETORICALLY WHO WAS PAKISTAN AN "ALLY" AGAINST?

3. IN HIS REMARKS, CHAVAN VARIOUSLY DESCRIBED THE US JUSTIFICATIONS FOR LIFTING THE EMBARGO AS "UNTENABLE", "INVALID", AND LACKING "CREDIBILITY". HE STATED THAT HE WAS GLAD THE EMBARGO HAD BEEN LIFTED BEFORE AND NOT AFTER HIS POSTPONED WASHINGTON VISIT SINCE HE WOULD HAVE FELT "MORE CHEATED" IF THE US HAD WAITED UNTIL AFTER THE JOINT COMMISSION MEETING TO ANNOUNCE ITS DECISION.

4. CHAVAN TOOK OCCASION TO DENY COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA (CPI) MP BHUPESH GUPTA'S ALLEGATION THAT THE GOI WAS "DECEIVED" BY SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER DURING THE SECRETARY'S OCTOBER 1974 VISIT. HE COMMENTED THAT THE TALKS IN NEW DELHI DURING THE VISIT WERE MERELY EXPLORATORY.

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INDIA WAS CHIEFLY INTERESTED IN SEEKING OUT US VIEWS ON THE SIMLA PROCESS AND ITS EVOLVING RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHINA AND THE SOVIET UNION AS THEY AFFECTED THE SUBCONTINENT. LATER IN HIS STATEMENT, HOWEVER, CHAVAN HELD THAT THE US IN ITS ARMS EMBARGO DECISION HAD EITHER "DECEIVED ITSELF" OR "DECEIVED INDIA"--NO THIRD ALTERNATIVE WAS POSSIBLE, HE ASSERTED.

5. IN LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE, CHAVAN SAID THAT THE THRUST

OF INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY WOULD CONTINUE ON COURSE. THIS MEANT GIVING THE HIGHEST PRIORITY TO IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH INDIA'S NEIGHBORS AND WITH STRENGTHENING THE NON-ALIGNMENT MOVEMENT, AS WELL AS INDIA'S TIES WITH THE "THIRD WORLD". HE SAID THAT THE GOI WOULD CONTINUE ITS ATTEMPT TO "EDUCATE" THE US. IT WOULD ALSO ATTEMPT TO CONVINCE THE PAKISTAN GOVT AND PEOPLE THAT A MILITANT POLICY WOULD INEVITABLY END IN "RUIN" FOR THEMSELVES. IN AN APPARENT REFERENCE TO THE US, CHAVAN EMPHASIZED THAT INDIA WOULD CONTINUE TO PURSUE A "MATURE" RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER COUNTRIES AND MENTIONED THAT HIS "BLUNT" REMARKS IN HIS PRESENT SPEECH SHOULD BE TAKEN WITH THIS IN MIND. HE ALSO EMPHASIZED THAT A LONG-TERM INDIAN EFFORT TO STRENGTHEN UNITY, ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE AND A SELF-SUFFICIENT ARMS INDUSTRY AT HOME WERE THE GUARANTEE FOR A SUCCESSFUL FOREIGN POLICY ABROAD.

6. IN AN ASIDE ON THE SOVIET ASIAN SECURITY CONCEPT, CHAVAN NOTED THAT THE PLAN HAD YET TO BE REDUCED TO A CONCRETE FORM. HE MENTIONED THAT INDIA WOULD SUPPORT THE IDEA IF IT HELPED TO INCREASE PROSPECTS FOR ECONOMIC AND MILITARY SECURITY, BUT REJECT IT IF IT SEEMED GEARED AGAINST THE INTERESTS OF ANY ONE COUNTRY.
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